

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

HA-05 MCT-02 AID-05 /076 W

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P R 131409Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3145

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 2913

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV PINT BC

SUBJ: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: GABORONE 2889

1. IN THE COURSE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 13 ON OTHER SUBJECTS, FONMIN MOGWE COMMENTED ON SEPTEMBER 11 UNIVERSITY STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. HE ALLEGED THAT OPPOSITION PARTY, BOTSWANA NATIONAL FRONT (BNF) HAD BEEN ACTIVE ON CAMPUS FOR SEVERAL WEEKS INCITING STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE ON ISSUE OF THE INDICTMENT OF BDF SERGEANT TSWAIBE.

2. MOGWE NOTED BNF/STUDENT ALLEGATIONS THAT GOB HAD REVERSED ITS POSITION ON PROSECUTING SERGEANT TSWAIBE BECAUSE OF FOREIGN PRESSURE. MOGWE SAID THIS IS NOT SUPPORTED BY THE FACTS, THAT PRESIDENT KHAMA'S POSITION ALL ALONG HAD BEEN: LET THE INVESTIGATION GO FORWARD WITH RESULTS SENT TO PUBLIC PROSECUTOR WHO WOULD HAVE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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MAKE THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER TO INDICT SERGEANT. THE INVESTIGATION TOOK PLACE AND THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR HAS DECIDED TO GO AHEAD, THAT THERE "IS A CASE". IT IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE COURTS. MOGWE SAID HE WAS AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HOW STUDENTS COULD HONESTLY TAKE ISSUE WITH PROCEDURES THAT HAD BEEN

FOLLOWED. AFTER ALL, HE SAID, "WE CAN'T HAVE
BDF SOLDIERS GOING AROUND SHOOTING PEOPLE".

3. BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF CREDIBILITY OF THE
STUDENTS' POSITION, MOGWE SAID PRESIDENT KHAMA
HAD CONCLUDED THAT THEIR MANIFESTATION WAS IN
RESPONSE TO BNF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN;
THIS ACCOUNTED FOR PRESIDENT KHAMA'S AGREEMENT
TO TURN THE MATTER OVER TO THE POLICE WITH
INSTRUCTIONS TO "GIVE THEM A GOOD LICKING"
IF THEY TRIED TO LEAVE THE CAMPUS TO DEMONSTRATE
ON A MATTER WHICH WAS UP TO THE JUDICIARY.
THE POLICE ACTION, WHICH MOGWE SAID WAS BEING
JUDGED BY PUBLIC AS "HARSH", WAS CONSIDERED
NECESSARY TO ASSURE THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S
DETERMINATION WAS CLEAR THAT IT WOULD NOT
TOLERATE ANY PUBLIC PRESSURE ON THE JUDICIARY'S
HANDLING OF THIS ISSUE.

4. MOGWE SAID A MEETING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR
THIS AFTERNOON (SEPTEMBER 13) WITH BOTSWANA
TRADE UNION DELEGATION. HE NOTED THE UNIONS
HAVE TAKEN SIDE OF THE STUDENTS, THAT THIS ALSO
APPEARED TO BE THE INITIAL REACTION OF THE GENERAL
PUBLIC. MOGWE WAS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT AS
FACTS BECAME KNOWN, THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION
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WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD. IN ANY EVENT, HE CONCLUDED
GOB HAS NO INTENTION OF BACKING DOWN ON THE
PRINCIPAL OF JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, MOGWE SAID HE
FULLY EXPECTED "SOME" STUDENTS WOULD BE EXPELLED
FROM UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR ROLE AS RINGLEADERS.
AS THE SITUATION COOLS DOWN, HE HAD NO DOUBT
UNIVERSITY WOULD REOPEN AND OPERATE NORMALLY.
NORLAND

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